



Hanford Update

Fall 2003



U.S. Department of Energy -- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -- Washington State Department of Ecology

Dispute Over Management of Transuranic Waste Settled *Agencies seek public comment on proposed milestone changes*

On October 24, the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) announced had reached agreement on management of mixed waste at Hanford.

The agreement will result in significant changes being made to the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) M-91 milestones. These changes identify the schedule for retrieval, storage and processing of mixed waste. The proposed changes to the TPA will be finalized after tribal nations, stakeholders, and the public have an opportunity to comment on them.

Some of the key milestones in the agreement include:

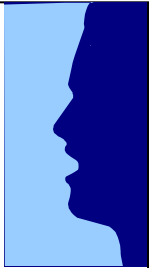
- Begin retrieving suspect transuranic waste retrievably stored in the low-level burial ground by November 15, 2003
- Begin treating remote-handled, mixed low-level waste by 2008
- Complete retrieval of contact-handled low-level and transuranic waste by 2010
- Complete retrieval of remote-handled low-level and transuranic waste by 2018

In addition to the proposed changes to the TPA, the agreement identifies that the determination as to whether the state has the authority to require treatment of mixed transuranic waste will be addressed through the judicial system. If the court finds in favor of the state, new milestones would be added to the TPA on the treatment or certification of this waste for the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP).

This agreement would replace Ecology's Director's Determination for the dispute regarding the M-91 milestones, require withdrawal of Ecology's Administrative Order, and dismiss USDOE's challenges to those actions.

The agencies will take public comment on the proposed TPA changes from December 1, 2003 through February 10, 2004. No public meetings are scheduled at this time. If you would like to request a meeting, contact Yvonne Sherman, (509) 376-6216; or Mary Anne Wuennecke, (509) 736-3036.

Public Comment Periods & Meetings



December

- 15 – Public comment begins on Department of Ecology draft permit for interim component closure of Tank C-106

USDOE will hold four regional public workshops on their "Risk-Based End States" document in December.

For dates and locations, please see "Hanford Happenings" on back page.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Hanford Cleanup Line

800-321-2008

Call the Hanford Cleanup Line for more information about these and other Hanford cleanup issues and activities

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News & Notes

Updates & Status Reports

Public Input Requested on Draft Tank Closure Permit

The Washington State Department of Ecology wants your feedback on a draft RCRA “Interim Component Closure Permit” for Tank C-106 at Hanford. Tank C-106 is the first “demonstration” tank that will be permitted for retrieval and “interim component closure” in order for the agencies to gather information about the best methods for retrieving and future closure of tanks.

Ecology plans to take public comment on the draft permit December 15, 2003 through February 10, 2004. No public hearings are scheduled at this time. To request a hearing, contact Ginger Wireman, (509) 736-3008.

Final Hanford Solid Waste EIS Expected in December

The U.S. Department of Energy – Richland Operations Office (USDOE-RL) plans to issue the final Hanford Solid Waste Environmental Impact Statement (HSW EIS) by the end of December. The Records of Decision for the document will be issued no less than 30 days after the final HSW EIS is published.

More than 250 people attended six regional public meetings in Washington and Oregon this spring to discuss the issues associated with the EIS and provide input on a revised version of the original draft.

The revised draft analyzed alternatives for managing certain types of wastes (low-level waste, mixed low-level waste, and transuranic waste) generated at Hanford and received from other USDOE sites. It also evaluated the impacts associated with the disposal of immobilized low-activity wastes from Hanford tank waste processing.

Issues voiced by members of the public included:

- the need for route-specific transportation impacts
- an immediate end to burying waste at Hanford in unlined trenches
- cumulative impact analyses of current Hanford waste and potential waste shipped to Hanford
- additional analyses on groundwater impacts
- additional time for the public to respond to the draft document.

In response to several requests from organizations and the public, USDOE extended the public comment period to provide an extra two weeks for people to comment. The HSWEIS has been revised to address comments received from the public, regulators, and other stakeholders.

River Corridor Contract Extended

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) extended Bechtel Hanford, Inc.’s river corridor cleanup contract through February 2004, following months of appeals to the General Accounting Office (GAO.) In April 2003, USDOE awarded the \$1.05 billion contract to Washington Closure Company (WCC), a team made up of Washington Group International, Fluor Federal Services and Earth Tech. Current incumbent BHI filed a formal procurement protest in May, and the GAO sustained BHI’s protest in August. WCC then filed a request for reconsideration with GAO, and DOE filed a statement supporting the request. Until the GAO issues a final ruling, BHI remains as the contractor.

News & Notes

Updates & Status Reports

Shutdown at Fast Flux Test Facility Continues

Work to shutdown (deactivate) Hanford's Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) continues. Some of the major shutdown activities include: draining FFTF sodium, washing and storing FFTF fuel, and deactivating auxiliary plant systems to a safe and stable condition. These shutdown activities are reflected in the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) Change Request on the shutdown that was signed in May.

The final TPA change package and the Comment and Response Document can be viewed online at <http://www.hanford.gov/tpa/current.html> under "FFTF Transition Public Comments and Responses". For a hard copy, call the Hanford Cleanup Line at 1-800-321-2008.

Long-Term Stewardship

The U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office and Office of River Protection have completed the *Hanford Long-Term Stewardship Program and Transition: Preparing for Environmental Management Cleanup Completion* (DOE/RL-2003-39). This document is the result of a collaborative process that included a series of public workshops sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) regarding long-term stewardship.

The development of this document included the consideration of the comments and suggestions received from the Tribal Nations and from the public comment period on the working draft *Hanford Long-Term Stewardship Program: Integrating Accelerated Site Cleanup Completion with Long-Range Post-cleanup Planning* (HNF-12254, Rev. A), including the comments provided by the Hanford Advisory Board. A *Comment Response Document* (DOE/RL-2003-46), which dispositions Tribal Nations and other comments received during the public comment period, has also been written.

The Hanford Long-Term Stewardship document helps to define the strategy and activities necessary for the Hanford Site to thoughtfully transition to long-term stewardship at the completion of the cleanup mission, ensuring the continued protection of human health and the environment. Hanford has appreciation for the time the Tribal Nations, the HAB, and public responders took to participate in this process. Involving external parties at the very beginning of the development, and using facilitated, highly interactive brainstorming, was a new approach for RL. Hanford found the approach very beneficial in this uncharted area. If you have questions, please contact Jim Daily at (509) 376-7721.

Little Change in Evaluation of Public Involvement

People who participated in this year's evaluation of Tri-Party Agreement public involvement activities gave the agencies similar marks to last year. Overall, most people who responded are satisfied with public involvement efforts, however there are areas where people say improvements can and should be made. The agencies will focus on recommendations from the surveys in the coming year, including using graphics more effectively; explaining more clearly why people should care about the issues; writing notices and fact sheets in more easily understandable terms; and developing standard templates for TPA documents such as notices and fact sheets. To view the full report, go to Ecology's Web site at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/index.html> under "click here to see the PI survey results" on the right hand side of the page. To receive a hard copy, call the Hanford Cleanup Line, 800-321-2008.

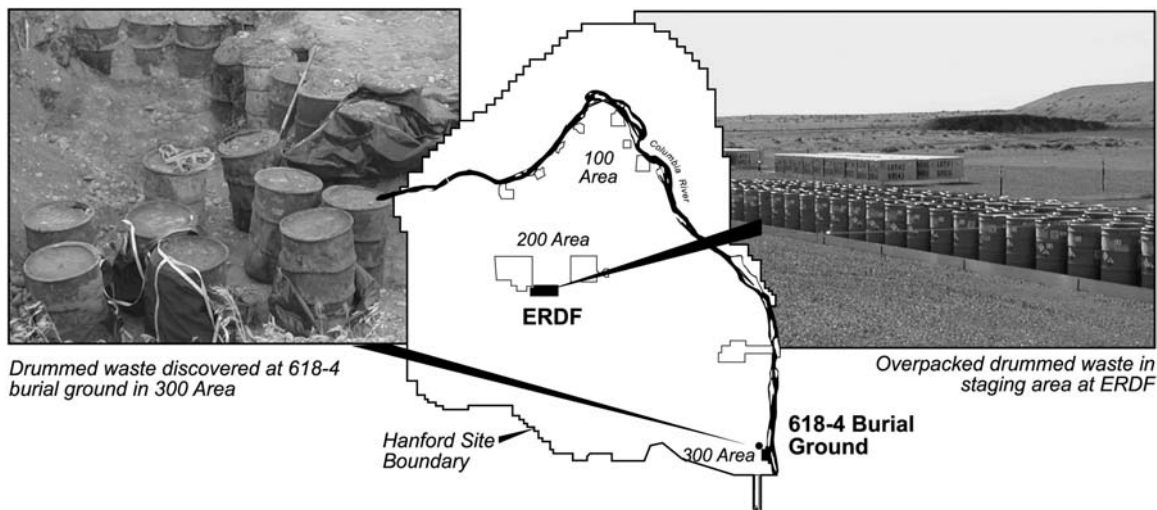
Help Fight Pollution

... join the electronic Hanford mailing list. Want to see less paper going to our landfills? Sign up to receive this publication and others related to Hanford issues via email. Just call the Hanford Cleanup Line at 800-321-2008 and tell us you want to switch. All you have to do is provide your e-mail address. To help expedite the change-over, make sure you give us the four-digit number above your name on this mailing label so we can remove you from the postal mail list.

Spotlight On: Drummed Waste

Treatment and Disposal of Drummed Waste from Hanford's 300 Area

A treatment and disposal alternative has been selected for drums of uranium waste removed from burial ground 618-4 since 1998. This burial ground is located in the 300 Area and is being cleaned up under the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) 300-FF-1* Record of Decision. These drums contain depleted uranium turnings (small pieces from the machining process) submerged in oil. They were placed into burial ground 618-4 during the 1950's and since uranium turnings are pyrophoric, they were covered with oil to prevent self-ignition. The oil is contaminated and must be treated prior to disposal of the drummed waste in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF).



From 1998 until 2002, these drums were stored and managed in the 300 Area. To prepare for transportation, the drums were placed in overpacks, either another steel drum or a steel box. Between April and August 2002, all of the drums were moved to a staging area at the ERDF located in the central part of the Hanford Site. This effort allowed for staging the waste further from the Columbia River in the 200 Area rather than the 300 Area, which is adjacent to the Columbia River. Also, the staging allowed for additional time to identify appropriate treatment facilities. A 30-month time limit was imposed for drums placed in the ERDF staging area and all drums needed to be removed by October 2004.

A large number of technologies were screened to identify the potential treatment options for the depleted uranium turnings and contaminated oil prior to final disposition. Based on the CERCLA evaluation, the treatment alternative selected is liquid/solid phase separation followed by incineration of the liquids and stabilization of the solids. Results of the evaluation can be found in the *Treatment and Disposal Alternative Assessment/Implementation Plan for the 300-FF-1 Operable Unit Depleted Uranium Metal in Oil Drummed Waste* (BHI-01682) report available on the internet at <http://www.hanford.gov/tpa/current.html> or at Hanford's Public Information Repositories.

In September, the drums were shipped offsite to a treatment facility in Tennessee where the phase separation will occur, the oil and solvent waste will be incinerated, and the depleted uranium turnings will be stabilized. The stabilized uranium turnings will be returned to Hanford and disposed at the ERDF. The company that will be implementing the preferred alternative is Perma-Fix. They are capable of performing the preferred alternative in its entirety within the 30-month time limit. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has evaluated this facility and determined that it is acceptable to treat this waste.

Hanford Declassification Project Complete Ahead of Schedule, Under Budget

The Department of Energy's Hanford Declassification Project team was recently recognized for its work to review and declassify more than 1.3 million pages of documents since 1995. Hanford is the only site in the DOE complex to complete the declassification review of all of its document holdings and did so 6 months ahead of schedule and \$500K under budget. The declassification team at Hanford had a budget of \$2M per year for the project and the project was due for completion at the end of fiscal year 2003.

Included in the 1.3 million pages of documents declassified are over 85,000 photos of Hanford workers and facilities, most were taken between 1943 and 1960. The declassification team also provided its expertise in many other reviews including the review of over 500 drawings and aperture cards.

With declassification of Hanford documents now complete, this unique and monumental effort will benefit the current Hanford cleanup/closure mission as well as provide historical Hanford information for the interested public. The documents and images that were made publicly available are on the web at the following address:
<http://www2.hanford.gov/declass/>.

Hanford Historical Photos – 1943/1944



Hanford Happenings

How you can get involved!

Risk-Based End States Workshops

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) will conduct four regional workshops to gather public input on a draft document that describes plans to comply with USDOE Headquarter policies to reassess existing cleanup decisions on the basis of risks as defined by land-use plans. The document must be finalized by January 30, 2004. USDOE-HQ is also reviewing the draft document. The following workshops are your chance to provide input.

- **December 4** Richland
 City Council Chambers, City Hall; 505 Swift Blvd, Richland
- **December 9** Portland, OR
 Oregon State Office Building, Room 120 B-C, 800 N.E. Oregon Street, Portland
- **December 10** Hood River, OR
 Hood River Inn Best Western, Gorge Room, 1108 East Marina Way, Hood River
- **December 11** Seattle
 Mountaineers Club, 300 Third Avenue West, Seattle

For more information, contact Yvonne Sherman, USDOE, (509) 376-6216.

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